

The CASE of the Manufacturers and Retailers of Silk Goods, under the New Projected Duty.

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THE Value of Raw and Thrown Silk Imported into *England* for the Weavers Use, amounts to about 500000 l. per *Annum*.

This Silk wrought up, and manufactured here, may double its Value; so the whole may be computed at One Million per *Annum*, upon which the whole Duty is design'd to be laid.

This Duty is said to affect these Manufactures two ways; *First*, By Taxing the Stock in hand. *Secondly*, By putting a Duty upon New Goods hereafter to be Manufactured.

The First of these will ruin the Retailer; the Second will ruin the Manufacture it self.

As to the First, it ought to be consider'd, that the Retailers are by no means in a Condition to pay the designed Tax for their Stocks. The Goods now in their Hands have already been Taxed; and are Yearly Taxed, by Virtue of a Clause in every Land-Tax. And it must be farther Remembred, that a great Part of these Goods are such as our frequent Publick Mourning, especially that late one which lasted Two Years, threw upon the Hands of the Retailers; to the utter Ruin of many, and the unspeakable Damage of the rest. So that to load the Stock in Hand with other additional Duties, must be an insupportable Burthen.

As to the Second, A Duty upon all Foreign Imported Manufactured Silks, &c. is already Agreed to in the House: But if it be extended farther, and laid upon the Manufacture made up at home, Nothing but Perplexity and Desolation can attend it; and it must End in the Ruin of the Manufacture it self, and the numerous Families that depend upon it.

To ruin any Manufacture, nothing more is requisite, than to put it under Difficulties and Discouragement, and to make it come Dear to the Market.

Now a New Duty, especially if it be a High one, and continued for many Years, unavoidably subjects the Commodity it is laid upon, to all the Disasters that can fall upon it. *France, Holland and Flanders*, seem to want nothing else but this Expedient, to rob us of our Silk Manufacture; which they cannot fail to do, if they can afford a better Pennyworth than our selves; which they must do of course, if this Duty be laid. And if once the *French*, the *Dutch*, and the *Flemish*, or any one of these Nations turn the Ballance of Manufactured Silks to their own Country, the Raw Silks follow of course; and the Trade of *Turkey* and *Italy*, with the Woollen Manufacture depending upon them, will in a great degree be lost to this Nation, and transplanted to a Foreign Country, without hopes of Recovery.

But the Method of laying this Tax or Duty, will add very much to the Weight and Burthen of it; and seems to be liable to a double Exception. *First*, In respect to the Crown. *Secondly*, In respect to the Subject.

It cannot possibly be Collected without an exceeding Great Charge to the Crown, because of the Number of Officers to be appointed in every considerable Town in *England*, the Sallaries of whom will eat up a great part of the Duty. And as to the Manner of it, if it is to be by Sealing and Marking, Nothing can be so Perplexing, so Grievous, so Hazardous, and so Detrimental to the Fair Dealer. The Officer must come to his Shop or Warehouse, all his Goods must be laid open, Exposed and Measured, then Marked or Sealed, before they can be Sold. If the Mark or Seal be lost or dropt, he is liable to the Penalty, and the Pleasure of every Informer, as if the Duty had not been paid. Searches and Seizures will be the Work of every Officer; Suits and Controversies, Defences, Trouble and Perplexity, the Lot of every Trader. The Smugler and Unfair Dealer will be the only Person encouraged; and instead of the Punishment he deserves, meet with a Temptation and Reward at the same time for his Villainy.

For these, and many other obvious Reasons, It is humbly hoped a British Parliament will never Consent to Raise Money by these Methods.

N.B. Every Pound weight of wrought Silks made in *England* of Foreign Thrown Silk, doth pay 4s. 9d. by the present Duty on its Importation.

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